

THE CHURCHES AND TO-DAY'S SERVICES

Twelve Great Verses; The Courage Verse

Sermon by
REV. FLOYD W. TOMKINS.

Joshua needed encouragement. He had to lead the Israelites over Jordan and settle them in the land of Canaan, and they were not a people easily persuaded. They had rebelled against God and against Moses time and again, and they were likely to rebel against him. But God gave him an assurance of His constant and ready help, and, as a result, the work was finally accomplished. Nothing that God asks us to do is impossible. If we rely upon Him, He will carry us through.

In great emergencies we need courage. But I think we need it even more in the daily and ordinary life. Courage in little things will bring courage in great things. If we have courage to live we will have courage to die; if we are brave in facing the annoyances and vexations and disappointments of every day, our natures grow stronger through the exercise of self-control and self-reliance. Then, when we are ready to trust Him and He responds to our need by an outpouring of His power in generous and loving fashion, I am deeply impressed by the need of daily courage. So many people find it hard to live; body, business, associations, mind and spirit are called upon to wage an unceasing battle. Those foolish enough to destroy all the very presence of necessity during until their sides and strength gives. We sometimes laugh at the old inscription on tombstones in country churchyards:

"MOMENT WE BEGIN TO LIVE,
WE ALL BEGIN TO DIE."

The moment we begin to live, we all begin to die"; but there is philosophy in the lugubrious saying. For we have to fight to keep alive by eating and sleeping and exercising. The good in our natures is attacked by evil and it must be repelled, only by struggle do we vanquish the destructive forces which seek to defeat God's creative and reconstructive power. In all the trials of life, God is fighting for us, and if we trust Him all must end well. It is lack of courage that leads to suicide. It is lack of courage that makes men helpless and dependent upon others. It is lack of courage that brings nervous prostration and weariness of body and mind, and that sad spiritual despondency which makes mistakes for religion, but which is the enemy of true religion. God stands by us as He stood by Joshua, and it is our part to stand by Him and trust Him, and fight till the victory comes.

Consider, first, that the battle is the Lord's. He is deeply interested in the life and success of every child. He has created, just as the human father is interested in the welfare and progress of his son. The moment we think of ourselves as an enemy, seeking to frustrate our plans and designs, we allow our ignorance of His nature. He is above all else our prosperity. It is not His will that we should perish or that we should find it hard to live. If He permits obstacles to come in our way, it is because He knows we can grow strong by overcoming obstacles. He sends trials and brings the flesh, modesty and virtue to shadow our way, it is only that He may draw us nearer to His own loving power. Hence courage comes from the realization that God is for us, since if He is for us, who can be against us? (Romans, viii, 31). I am made brave, then, by the knowledge that God is on my side.

COURAGE NOT ATTRIBUTIVE.

BUT A DIVINE GRACE.

Consider again, that courage is not a human attribute, but a divine grace. I know that we speak of animals as brave, as when a mother hen defends her brood against attack, but this is an instinct given by the Creator for her protection, not ours. God can have a physical courage which leads them to do daring things; but this agent is a kind of instinct with which God endows some men, that they may accomplish His will. There is also a kind of brute courage which works harm, but this is simply a perversion of the divine gift of divine courage, which the body has not the grace to bestow. For He wants us to be good and brave, not in the face of temptation. He wants us to hold the right so high and holy that no man dare attack without our making ready to battle. Brute courage sinks into insignificance besides this braver of the spirit which dares men to break down the barriers between time and space, which defounds the soul from the deepest endanglements of doubt and sin and shames off the moral courage that God especially promises to give. To stand before the world's evil and denounce it as the enemy of God. To take a position on the side of purity and temperance and honesty, to face the scorn and misunderstanding of wicked men while the personal battle with temptation is being waged in the church, that God's kingdom may be held clear from human infidelity and error. Moral courage is needed in the family, that children may learn where the right lies and bring their young enthusiasm to defend it. It is needed in public life, that honor may be exalted and truth upheld. God helps us always and everywhere to be brave for the cause of justice and truth.

NEED COURAGE TO WORK.

SHRIMP TO HOGS EXHAUSTED.

We need them to come to work, and God gives this by assuring us that He is working with us, and that our labor is not in vain. (3) Courage to resist evil in ourselves and in the world, and God helps by the Gospel truth that Christ has already won and once for all conquered sin, and we have only to rest in His victory. He commands us for us when we call upon Him. (3) Courage in dealing with men. We long to help them, but they resent and oppose us.

Let us pray for victory, which can only mean success in slaughter. They say: "This is Christianity," and turn away in disgust.

The only answer can be that this is not Christianity. A great pagan was once asked what he thought of Christianity, and replied, "I have been tried." So the governments of Europe to-day are not putting their Christianity into practice. Christ never taught co-operation and self-sacrifice and self-surrender for the suppression of nations. They have misunderstood, and are misrepresenting Him.

Visitors to the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican purchase mirrors from the guides so that through the mirrors they may gaze comfortably at the exquisite Michael Angelo paintings on the ceiling. So too people will not raise their eyes to look at God. But they have their eyes fixed on you. You are expected to show them what Christ is like.

SAYS WAR KILLED PIUS X

BISHOP CONGRATULATES LEAD AMERICAN PREACHER RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE.

Bishop Joseph H. Conroy, of Ogdensburg, N. Y., believes that he was the last American prelate to have an audience with Pope Pius X. He told of the incident his eyes filled with tears.

The bishop arrived from Europe on board the *Carpathia*, of the Cunard Line, Wednesday, accompanied by the Rev. P. J. Devlin of Watertown.

The audience with the Pontiff was August 6. They did not know the Pope had died until they arrived in this port.

"There is not the slightest doubt in my mind but that the war killed Pope X," the bishop said.

Labor Sunday will be observed today in all churches throughout the United States. The service will be at 11 o'clock, the Commission on Industrial Relations and Service of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The observance embraces 135,000 Protestant churches, representing thirty denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic Church.

REV. CHARLES S. MACFARLAND

The Rev. Charles S. MacFarland, secretary of the commission, expects that 50,000 sermons appropriate to Labor Day will be preached in response to the appeal.

THE CALL

BY BOY TEMPLE HOUSE

"And it saith unto him, Follow me—Matt. ix, 9."

Men saw a hated publican, of those base underlings who served the Roman state.

And sold their Hebrew heritage for gold.

Men cursed and spat at passing him—but one.

That God who looketh on the heart, cometh.

Gazed in his face, and saw the faith-filled eyes.

Whose warm response might cheer this grievous way.

For three long years of struggle, saw the hand.

That wrote the noblest gospel. And he spoke.

And said to Matthew, "Follow me."

"But I—My Father, I am he in whom thou art seeking vanity, ambition and—That girds man to others, indolence, And many a lesser blemish Christ, my Lord.

Look on me. Canst Thou find no more than these?"

I spoke—and caught the answer, "Follow me!"

LOCAL CHURCH NOTICES

First Presbyterian

Rev. E. T. McElderry, D. D., pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church, of Philadelphia, says that men of strong character are needed in the ministry. He recently told the students of the Dubuque German College and Seminary, at Dubuque, Ia., that although the Presbyterian Church has "quite enough ministers to supply the needy fields, abroad as well as at home," it has not enough men. Colleges and seminaries can turn out preachers. Dr. McElderry, but the preacher, "though he have all gifts and understand all knowledge, if he fail in the point of character, is of little use to the Kingdom of God."

Dr. Jarvis admitted that the majority of ministers are not a success, and that only a minority are attracting attention "by reason of their aggressiveness and successful results."

Concerning the relation of the minister's character to his sermons, the pastor says: "The sermon is the preacher incarnate in a living message. If the minister be not alive, his message cannot live either. The sermon may be humoristically perfect; it may be correct in doctrine, sublime in its moral content, but it is nevertheless dead save in so far as it has broken back of it. Living source, however, the level it reaches will not be above the moral character and spiritual outlook of the man who conceived and delivered it, any more than a stream can rise above its source. A minister to be successful in preaching the gospel must, therefore, incarnate its principles in his own life. It is a fact too well known for iteration that the preacher's life among the people speaks more eloquently than anything he ever says from the pulpit."

"It is a pitiful fact," he adds, "that frequently the life of the preacher neutralizes his messages and sometimes counteracts it altogether."

PULPIT NEEDS PREACHERS.

POLITICAL ECONOMISTS.

Dr. Jarvis reminds that the preacher's message must be conviction and His command. "In this connection he says: "However great the temptation may be to discourse upon other themes, however capable he may be of discussing the social, economic and political problems of the day, however masterfully he may speak on science and philosophy, he should confine himself to one subject."

"Thus the day of specialists. The teacher, the commercial world and the farm are demanding specialists in their departments. It helps the layman to have the specialist in the church. The minister needs to specialize the book which contains the good tidings he is to preach to the world."

Much of the advanced theology of to-day is but a restatement of the insidious doubts of the remote past, which have percolated down the ages, and the skeptical doubts of many dissenters from the faith, but which come to us full of the poison that kills spiritual life. The ministers who are winning souls to Christ and building up the church are the men who believe as Paul believed, touching the doctrines of Christ.

"After all, people do not care to go to church to hear men discuss sociology, economics, ethics, science, the new thought, or any other new thing under the sun, even though the preacher may be ever so competent to discuss these modern movements. The preacher who becomes reformer or lecturer sells his birthright, degrades his calling and very soon degrades his church. It is hardly any wonder that such counterfeits need to resort to picture shows and theatrical performances in order to fill up the pews from which the poor, driven hungry souls, fill them up with people who will be satisfied with the husks instead of the grain."

This is the kind of a plain speaking one-syllable lesson from a minister of the gospel, particularly about his own kind, and it is refreshing.

EUROPEAN CONFLICT DISCREDITS CHRIST

THOSE NATIONS PROFESSING CHRISTIANITY TURN THEIR RELIGION INTO RIDICULE BY SANGUINARY WARS.

The saddest thing about the European war is that it discredits Christianity before the world, says the Christian Herald. Men who believe the doctrines of Christianity are utterly and bitterly opposed to war. They know that all the nations involved in the present struggle call themselves Christian nations. They read that the

sovereigns exhorted their

armies to pray for victory, which can only mean success in slaughter. They say: "This is Christianity," and turn away in disgust.

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So the governments of Europe to-day are not putting their Christianity into practice.

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GRACE AVENUE BAPTIST

REV. W. C. GREEN

Grace Street Baptist